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ABSTRACT

The present and future of the American family are discussed in a collection of four papers. The first paper, by Mary Jo Bane, identifies trends in demographic and structural features of families, including fertility rates, marriage trends, divorce rates, household headship rates, and the proportion of women in the labor force. Societies' changing expectations and images of fatherhood are examined in the second paper, by James A. Levine. The third paper, by Carol Gilligan, discusses the changing nature of relationships between men and women in the 1980's, especially with respect to cooperation and conflict. In the last paper Michael Lamb focuses on the parental roles implicit in several nontraditional family styles, such as dual career/dual worker, single parent, and role-sharing families, and reviews the effects of paternal involvement on child development. (Author/JA)

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FOCUS ON THE FAMILY

New Images of Parents and Children in the 1980's

Papers by Mary Jo Bane
James A. Levine
Carol Gilligan
Michael Lamb

Introduction by Frances Litman

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Edited by Clifford Baden

Center for Parenting Studies
Wheelock College
200 The Riverway
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AUTHORS

Frances Litman is the Director of the Wheelock College Center for Parenting Studies, where she is responsible for program development and implementation of courses, workshops, seminars, and conferences. Mrs. Litman appears regularly on television to talk about parenting issues, and consults to industry, special education programs, and parent groups. She recently spent a semester as Visiting Fellow at the Wellesley College Center for Research on Women.

Mary Jo Bane was recently appointed Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Office of Planning and Budget, at the Department of Education in Washington, D.C. She is on leave from her positions as Associate Professor of Education and Lecturer in Sociology at Harvard University, and as Associate Director of the MIT-Harvard Joint Center for Urban Studies. In the latter position, she was responsible for coordinating research programs in family and population studies. Ms. Bane is the author of Here to Stay: American Families in the Twentieth Century and numerous articles. She is a member of the Family Impact Seminar in Washington, D.C.

James A. Levine is Director of the Program Development Institute at Bank Street College of Education. He also serves as Co-Director of the School-Age Child Care Project at the Wellesley College Center for Research on Women and is a consultant on child care and social policy for the Ford Foundation and many other organizations. He is author of numerous articles for Psychology Today, Redbook, Working Women and other magazines, and of two books: Day Care and the Public Schools and Who Will Raise the Children? New Options for Fathers (and Mothers), a book about men and childrearing which won the 1976 Family Life Book Award of the Child Study Association of America.

Carol Gilligan is an Associate Professor at the Laboratory of Human Development, at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Much of her research and writing focuses on moral development and on women. Two forthcoming articles are entitled "Moral Development in Late Adolescence and Adulthood" and "Women's Place in Men's Life Cycle." Dr. Gilligan recently spent a year as a Mellon Research Fellow at Wellesley College.

Michael Lamb is Assistant Research Scientist at the Center for Human Growth and Development at the University of Michigan. He is the editor of The Role of the Father in Child Development and is well-known for his many studies on that topic. Dr. Lamb also serves as the editor of a forthcoming book on Non-Traditional Families: Parenting and Child Development. His current research interests include infant social development in traditional and non-traditional families.

INTRODUCTION

Frances Litman

In the United States today, preoccupation with the changing American family is so widespread that it has become almost a national obsession.

This preoccupation manifests itself in a variety of ways. Television offers a prime-time program called "Family"; an award-winning movie sensitively portrays a divorced father and his relationship with his young son; a new magazine is created to offer "Working Mothers" articles about how children feel when their mothers work. At least one newspaper column every day focuses on some aspect of the family: the single-parent family, fathers' new roles, mothers who work. Feature articles in newsmagazines appear with an analysis of "the family's chance of survival." And recently the family has been identified as "the new feminist priority."

Nor is the professional literature neglecting the family. In early 1980 I reviewed books, scholarly journals, research reports, which had appeared in the last few years. The titles reveal their content and their point of view. In 1976, an esteemed group of pediatricians, psychiatrists, psychologists, sociologists, and educators addressed a symposium entitled "The Family: Can It Be Saved?"[1] A doomsday message. A view of impending disaster. In 1977, Dr. Urie Bronfenbrenner offered a more tentative diagnosis. "The family is changing,"[2] he suggested; America has lost its balance.

And then Mary Jo Bane wrote her book, and in its message of clear affirmation, she relieved our guilt; the American family is Here to Stay. "All indicators support the conclusion that there may be more personal commitment to the family

today than ever before."[3]

As America left the 1970's behind and headed into the 1980's, the Center for Parenting Studies at Wheelock College decided to try to sort out some of these conflicting messages and look into the future of the family. At least one point was clear: The American family has already changed and will continue to change. We are beginning to accept the fact that a revolution is taking place in which changes occur so rapidly that, as Ralph Smith of the Urban Institute has stated, "the shift is no longer an extension of long-term trends; we have passed a genuine watershed."[4]

In contemplating the present and future of the American family, we asked four distinguished experts to participate in a public symposium entitled "Focus on the Family: New Images of Parents and Children in the 1980's."

We asked Mary Jo Bane, based on past and current trends, to try to project a structural and demographic profile of families in the 80's. What are those trends? What is their significance for today's parents and children?

For James Levine and Carol Gilligan, we had a different kind of inquiry. As we enter the decade of the 80's with new images of fathers involved in child care and mothers involved in the world of work, how do these images square with reality? Are men and women really changing the nature of their relationships with each other and with children? What new kinds of cooperation or conflict will parents experience in the 1980's?

Finally, given our best predictions about likely changes in American families in the 1980's, we asked Michael Lamb to suggest what their psychological effects will be on children. If the roles played by men and women are becoming less distinct, what guideposts for growing up will be available to today's young children?

These questions are provocative and far-reaching. We are not asking for simple answers to complicated problems. We know that the family cannot be

separated from the society at large. Social forces, economic pressures, and the entire social ecology from television to prepared foods profoundly influence families.

The four presentations, reprinted in this volume, are an attempt to provide some guidelines for our thinking about families in the 1980's. The papers raise as many questions as they answer. I believe you will find them provocative--as did the 400 people who first heard these papers presented at Wheelock College in March 1980. The four authors provide some new perspectives, new insights, and a new appreciation of the American family with all its diversity, its vulnerability, and its enduring strength.

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A PROFILE OF THE FAMILY IN THE 1980'S

Mary Jo Bane

Parents and children in the 1980's are quite likely to be living in families that are different from those of the 1960's and 1970's -- more diverse, more fluid and, at the same time, smaller. These new families will set the context in which parents parent and children grow up. This paper will describe that context by identifying some of the trends that are taking place in the demographic and structural features of families.

Before I start "confidently" making predictions, it's worth thinking a little bit about what somebody who was writing this paper 25 years ago might have said to you. If a renowned sociologist or demographer in 1955 had been making predictions about the future of the family, he might have said something like this: "Well, here it is, 1955, and I'm observing the demographic trends over the last 10 or 15 years, and I see a couple of things that are very clear. It is very clear that birth rates are going up faster than we ever expected them to. It's clear that people are getting married at higher rates and are getting married younger, more so than we ever expected them to. It's clear that divorce rates have been going down now for ten years; that's really a good sign. I predict confidently that this pattern will continue. Birth and marriage rates will continue to rise; divorce rates will continue to fall. We've seen some women dropping out of the labor force since they went to work during the war and that will probably continue. In the 1980's, what we'll see is a country full of big, happy families with working fathers and homemaker mothers, and very low divorce rates."

I will now go on to <u>confidently</u> predict what the future will look like in ten

years. I think it is worth keeping in mind, though, that these kinds of predictions can easily be wrong, and that perhaps one shouldn't take them with complete seriousness.

What the picture looks like now, of course, is really quite different from what it looked like in 1955, and the kinds of trends I'm going to describe and the kinds of predictions I'm going to make are, indeed, very different.

Fertility

What we have been seeing over the last 15 years is not a continued rise in fertility rates, but instead a sharp decline. When you look over the historical period from about the beginning of the century to about 1975 or 1980, it appears that fertility rates -- the average number of children that each woman has -- have been going down fairly consistently. The experience in the late '40s and early '50s and into the early '60s was probably an oddity in the overall demographic trend, a bit of a reversal. From that perspective, the current decline looks less unusual and it is perhaps safer now than in 1955 to predict that the continued trend toward somewhat lower fertility is likely to continue.

What we have now, as you probably read in the papers, is about three million births a year. This is an interesting number from the point of view of population growth. There are some other interesting numbers in connection with fertility, though. One is the proportion of the population which is likely to remain childless, and the second interesting number is the average number of children that each woman is likely to have. During the "baby boom" period of the late '50s and early '60s, very low proportions of the women who came of age during those periods remained childless during their life time -- only about seven or eight percent of the women born 1930-1935 remained childless. And they had, on the average, slightly more than three children per woman over their life time.

Now it looks like women born in the late 1940's and early 1950's who are now coming of age bear less resemblance to their mothers than to their grandmothers in

terms of fertility patterns. They are looking in their 20's like women born 1900-1920 looked in their 20's, and we can use that information to make some predictions as to what they will look like later on. It looks like about 15 to 20 percent of those women will remain childless for their life time, and it looks like the average number of children per woman will be about 1.8. We don't expect anybody to actually have 1.8, mind you, but overall that's about what the fertility rate is going to look like. Now that, of course, is slightly below replacement level, which means that if it continues, in about the early part of the next century we'll start seeing a bit of decline in the population. It is important to keep in mind that that has some effect on the society and on parents and children in the society. I want to come back to these after I run through some other trends, but let me point out a few things now.

Lower fertility rates combined with the long life expectancies we now have mean that the society as a whole is going to be older, on the average. The proportion of children in the population will be smaller; the proportion of the older people larger and that's likely to give a different feel to the society. The society is likely to have different problems and preoccupations when it has an older population than a younger one. It may, for example, worry less about schools and street crime and more about retirement. I think that's something that we need to think about: What the major issues will be in the future, and how we will respond to them. Smaller numbers of children, of course, also mean that children being born have fewer brothers and sisters, since families individually are likely to be smaller. The modal number of children per woman is two, which gives children few opportunities for taking care of younger children, modeling themselves after older brothers or sisters, or learning how to get along in groups. That's quite different from the families children grew up in in the past.

I think the trend in fertility is really important. Although I wouldn't bet the farm on it, it looks to me and to demographers who have looked at these trends

that this one is likely to continue on for five or ten years.

Marriage

A second important trend shaping the family in the 80's is in regard to marriage. In the late 1950's and early 1960's -- the "baby boom" period -- average age at marriage was quite low. Large proportions of young men and women were getting married at earlier ages than we had seen in the past. That seems to be changing now, back toward the pattern of earlier in the century. It looks as though the average age of marriage is going up a bit, and it looks as though young people are remaining single well into their 20's. That, of course, is coming about for a combination of reasons -- people getting more education; people being on their own before they get married, and so on -- but what we are seeing is a later age at marriage, and consequently, a later age when women have their first children. We are also seeing a larger proportion of the young adult population who are unmarried, some of whom live at home with their parents, some of whom live on their own.

This trend has some interesting implications for parents and children in the 1980's. Parents, on the average, will be slightly older, even with the rather high current proportions of births to school-age mothers. It's not clear what that will mean for children: older parents should be more mature, and in that sense better able to handle the tasks of parenting; at the same time, they may have less energy and enthusiasm for the job. Older mothers are more likely to have worked and thus to continue working, a trend I'll discuss more fully later on.

Another implication of the trend toward later marriage is that children are likely to hang around their parents' homes longer. This is partly countered by a trend toward independent living among young adults, which I'll discuss later, but the fact remains that unmarried children are more likely to live with parents than married children. Rising housing costs may make it even more attractive to children to stay at home. For better or worse, parents may find themselves being parents for longer than they expected and thus confronting the joys and problems of

living with men and women in their early 20's.

Divorce

A third trend that has gotten a lot of publicity is the divorce rate. Probably 30 to 40 percent of the first marriages that are now being contracted will end in divorce rather than ending in the death of one of the spouses. It's worth remembering that there is a converse to that statistic: If 30 to 40 percent of marriages are likely to end in divorce, 60 to 70 percent are not. We are still seeing, in short, a majority of marriages which last until the death of one of the partners. But 30 to 40 percent is not a small number. That number plus the statistics on the number of children involved in divorce leads to the conclusion that probably 30 to 40 percent of the kids who are now being born are likely to experience the divorce of their parents at some time during their childhood.

The divorce rate has been going up quite dramatically since the late 50's, and especially so since the early 70's. There's some reason to think that it might level off and reverse itself: The last trend I talked about towards later age of marriage may have some implications for the divorce rate. It does appear that marriages which are most likely to break up are those between very young people -- people who get married in their teens; perhaps didn't make the right choice, perhaps didn't know what they were doing. So if we are seeing, as we are, a rise in the age of marriage, it may be that the divorce rate will level off a bit. I think, though, that there are probably pressures which will keep it high, at least for a while. But the divorce rate is a third trend which is going to have a lot of implications for parents and children in the 80's leading up to the 90's.

Children who experience divorce or separation have that massive dislocation in their lives, and although the effects are not clearly understood, they are important. In addition to the dislocation of the divorce itself, those children are also more likely than others to experience a drop in family income, a residential move, and the return to work of their mothers. All of these together make for

quite an unstable period, however better it may be in other ways than the tension-filled time before the divorce.

Household Headship

A fourth important trend is in what demographers call the headship rate, a charming term which refers not to how many heads people have, but to the proportion of people in any given group who head their own households rather than living with other people. What we've been seeing over the last couple of decades is an increase in the proportion of different kinds of people -- especially old people, young people, separated and divorced people -- who set up their own households rather than living with somebody else. As I mentioned before, this is an important phenomenon for young people, age 20-24, who are not getting married yet because they are putting that off. What are they doing? Well, in the past almost all of them would have lived with their parents until the time they got married and set up new households. But what's happening now is that more of them -- both men and women -- are heading households for a period of time. There are also large proportions of older people, especially widows but some widowers as well, who live alone. In the past they might have lived with sisters, brothers, or children, but more and more are now heading their own households. After divorce and separation we see the same phenomena; instead of the divorced or separated woman or man moving back in with relatives or with other people, they are much more likely than ever before to set up their own households and live alone.

It is possible that the economic circumstances that we are encountering in this decade and that I'm afraid we have to project for at least a couple of years may do a bit of a reversal of this trend. One of the reasons that both young and old people have been moving out on their own, I think, is that they have been able to afford to. The income opportunities available to older people and to some extent younger people have been such that it has become economically feasible to find an apartment and live in it on their own. Housing price ratios are also favorable

to people setting up their own households, with small housing relatively cheaper than large housing. Those economic facts may be changing, and if economic times stay tough, it may be that people will not, in fact, be able to afford so often to live on their own. Perhaps we will then see young people staying at home longer, and older people moving in with others more often than we have been seeing in the past. It's hard to predict, and you wouldn't expect to see much of a reversal, but economics may force a bit of it.

I have already mentioned one possible implication of that trend reversal for parents and older children. The choices of the elderly with regard to independent living will also affect the lives of parents and children. Independent living has probably meant that children see less of their grandparents, but that they also see less of the conflicts and pressures that can arise when three generations must sacrifice their privacy and independence and live together. If that trend reverses, the lives of parents and children may change accordingly.

Women in the Labor Force

A fifth trend, which is also conditioned very much by economic circumstances and that we will therefore have to watch as the economy changes or doesn't, has to do with the proportion of women who are in the labor force. This is again a number that everybody knows. Ever since the early 1950's, the proportion of women in the labor force who report themselves to the labor force survey as working or looking for work has gone steadily up. Women now make up about 40 percent of the labor force, and about 50 percent of all women over the age of 14 are labor force participants. The most dramatic increases in labor force participation by women, of course, have been among wives and mothers. It is now the case that about 50 percent of women who have children under 18 are in the labor force and about a third of women who have children under 6 are in the labor force -- those are 1978 numbers.

Being in the labor force does not necessarily mean working full time. Being in the labor force means that when the Department of Labor statistics-gatherer

comes to your door and says: "Hello, I'm from the Department of Labor. What were you doing last week?" And you answer either: "I was working" or "I was unemployed and looking for work," you're counted as being in the labor force. So the labor force includes a large proportion of women who are unemployed and looking for work, who are working part time or are working only part of the year. Indeed, only about half of the women who are in the labor force at a given point are working full-year, full-time. Nonetheless, changes in the labor force participation over the last decade are quite striking. The changes have been taking place more rapidly than anyone had been predicting, especially among women with children. Conservative predictions now are suggesting that by 1990, 70 to 75 percent of all women of all ages will consider themselves in the labor force. My guess is that the proportion of those who are working full-year, full-time will also increase so that you'll see larger proportions of mothers working full-year, full-time.

I said earlier that I thought that that was driven by economics. I think more two-adult families are finding that they need the two incomes to keep up the standard of living to which they've been accustomed. Women who are on their own, whether living alone or living alone supporting their children, are also finding it necessary to increase their income. This has led to a sort of revolution: women are thinking of themselves continually as workers and are indeed working. So that is the fifth trend.

Families and Children

When you put these trends together and project them out, you get some interesting pictures. Let me mention a couple. The first one to think about is what is it going to be like for a typical child in the 1980's moving toward 1990, given this confluence of trends.

The average child is going to be born to a mother who is slightly older than the average mother was before, if the trend towards increasing age at childbirth continues. Few kids are average, however, and it's worth remembering that many will

be born to teenage mothers at the same time that many are born to older mothers.

We've all heard the scare stories about teenage pregnancies, and it is in fact the case that there is a larger proportion of births to teenagers than had been in the past. That is because teenage fertility rates are falling less rapidly than fertility rates of other groups, not because teenage fertility rates are going up: they are not. At any rate, though, you do have the question of the age of the mother, and that is an important thing for a child. I'm not sure which way it goes: whether if you're a kid you would prefer to be born to somebody who is young and energetic or a little older and more responsible. I don't know. But anyway, it is something to think about.

It is also the case that lower fertility rates are going to mean the typical child is going to have one sibling rather than two or three. What that means is that there is not going to be a play group for the kid within the home. There are not going to be the kinds of opportunities that kids in the past often had, to take care of and learn how to deal with younger children. My guess is, therefore, that some of those kinds of things are going to be more likely to take place outside the home. We're already seeing an enormous increase in the proportion of three- and four-year-olds who go to nursery school. I think that the large increase in the proportion who go to nursery school is due to a couple of different things. One is that their mothers are working and nursery school is a kind of child care arrangement. But a second reason, I think, is that when children have none or only one brother or sister, a parent sees the need for a more formal way of getting children together with other children. I think that is part of what is behind the nursery school movement.

So the typical child is going to have fewer brothers and sisters. The typical child is also going to have a working mother. His or her mother is not necessarily going to work all the time: I would, in fact, be very surprised if we moved towards a society where the majority of mothers stayed continuously in full-time, year-

round work, from two weeks after the birth of the child until they die off like their husbands at an early age. But I do think that the typical child is much more likely at most of the periods of life to have a working mother and that that too means some changes in the households. It may mean that children will be taking more responsibility within households. It will certainly mean that it will not be so odd to have a working mother, and that both boys and girls will grow up seeing that mothers work as well as fathers, as a normal pattern. It will probably mean that the house isn't so clean. It will mean that there is a different pattern of allocation of work among both the adults and the children in the household.

The typical child in the 1980's and early 1990's will also grow up, as I mentioned earlier, with about a 40 percent probability of spending, at some point, part of his childhood in a single-parent family. The effects of this may be influenced by the fact that these numbers are so large. If you're in a school class in which a quarter or a third of your classmates are also from single-parent families, it's not so bad to be from a single-parent family yourself. I think you'll be seeing situations in which schools will be adapting to this phenomenon more, and perhaps it will become a slightly less traumatic experience for children than it has been in the past.

Going along with that is the fact that children are much less likely to lose a parent through death during their childhood than they were in the past. That is both because life expectancies have gone up with death rates at different ages going down, and because with families smaller, the last child is born to parents who are on the average younger. So, you've got an increase in probability of having your parents split, but a decrease in the probability of losing a parent by death.

There are also some interesting implications as to what the probabilities are of children having grandparents, aunts and uncles, and great grandparents. With life expectancies the way they are and the length of generations the way they are, it is quite likely that the typical child will be able to know a great grandparent. Quite

likely the child will have his or her grandparents still alive during most of childhood. It is unlikely that the grandparents will be living in the same house with the children (though, as I mentioned before, it may be more likely), but not unlikely that the grandparents will be in close contact with the family.

Let me just run through a few more things about what this all may mean for the feel of the society. Children and parents, because of these demographic trends, will be living in a society where the range of households is likely to be much more diverse than it has been in the past. There have been times in the past when 75 percent of the households nationwide have been households composed of two parents and children. That was true during the 19th century and up through the early part of this century. Think about what the society looks like, feels like, when 75 percent of the households are parent and child households. That becomes the normal pattern and that is how you think about families. It is now the case, however, that only about a third of the households in the country are households composed of parents and children, and that the other households surrounding them are more likely to be made up of individuals living alone, couples without children, and so on. Consequently, the community is much more diverse in terms of the households that are available and the households that people see.

Now there is, of course, a question of the spatial location of different kinds of households. We can't really say that any given neighborhood in which a child grows up is going to be more diverse, with single-person households, and so on. But on the average nationwide there will be a good bit of diversity. The question of where different kinds of households are located is one that I think will be extremely interesting for the 80's and 90's. There is some indication, for example, that people are moving back to cities; fewer children may grow up continuously in the suburbs. It also seems to be true that young people, even before they get married, are more likely to buy houses and therefore to stay in them. These are both quite different housing patterns, with interesting implications for parents and children.

In sum, the demographic trends I have described are creating new kinds of households and new kinds of communities. Parents and children will be confronting a more varied and more fluid environment. They will have to cope with change and disruption, some of it pleasant and positive, some of it not. Every indication suggests, however, that parent-child bonds will, on the average, remain strong and that most families will learn to cope with these new challenges. With some luck, the society will learn to cope with them as well, adapting housing, schools, jobs and public service to the needs of non-conventional as well as traditional families. That is, indeed, the challenge of the decade.

IMAGES OF THE NEW FATHERHOOD

James A. Levine

There is little doubt that the last ten or fifteen years have substantially transformed our ideas and expectations about motherhood. In the mid-1960's the notion that a woman could combine childrearing with work outside the home was, at best, subjected to severe scrutiny; at worst, it was considered abnormal.

Today, the sheer power of numbers refutes any charges of deviance. Some forty-five percent of all mothers with preschool children are currently employed, as are more than fifty percent of all those women with children of school-age.[1] By 1990, according to a recent study by the Urban Institute, there will be 23.2 million preschool children in the country; 10.4 million of those (about 44 percent) will have mothers working outside the home.[2] For now and for the future, the most prevalent question raised about the combination of motherhood and employment is not whether it should be done, but how it can best be done.

As we enter the 1980's, our changing expectations and images of motherhood are being reflected throughout the culture, in new magazines at the supermarket or corner drug store (McCall's Working Mother, Working Woman, etc.), new manuals on childrearing for the "working woman," and new t.v. shows, such as "Alice."

But what about our understanding of fatherhood? Do we have new expectations and images of men, as we do of women? And if so, what do these images tell us about parenthood in the future?

To pursue these questions, I'd like to start off with a brief exam, Levine's Fatherhood Quiz, which is being administered here for the first time. I'm sorry I didn't warn you, but it's a very brief exam: three questions with two parts each.

You should be able to keep track of the answers in your head until we review them together.

I am going to describe or provide a quote from three fathers. In each case, your task is to tell me (1) who he is and (2) where you met him. As for the scoring of this exam, you don't get any credit unless you answer both parts of each question.

Here we go.

Father Number One: Father Number One is a writer by profession. He stayed home after his first son was born, which explains why his first novel had so many short chapters: he wrote them, as he put it, "between feedings and naps and changes of diapers." He might be described as an anxious, even overprotective parent. Every time he hears some car hot-rodding around the neighborhood, the squeal of racing tires cuts through him with the "sound of a struck cat." He has been seen dashing out of the house, wooden spoon still dribbling the tomato sauce he was stirring, to chase speeders and to lecture them about the danger they present to his children.

If one were looking for catchy labels to describe fathers in the 80's, Father Number One might be described as the First Anxious Father. He openly displays an anxiety about his children that other men may feel, but that has more commonly been shown by women. He is not anxious about what his sons will achieve or whether they will uphold the family name, but about their very being. He knows them so intimately, notices so much about them, that he worries almost constantly about them. As one description of him put it, "There was so much to worry about, when worrying about children,...at times,...(he) thought himself psychologically unfit for parenthood. Then he worried about that, too, and felt all the more anxious for his children."

Father Number Two: Father Number Two has his moments of anxiety too, all part of trying to cope from day to day as a single parent, to take care of two young children, to hold a job, and to establish something resembling a sex life. Caring for his children impels him to feelings of both love and rage that are overwhelm-

ingly powerful and physical. Let me share with you how he describes it:

> Before (the birth of my first child, Thomas), I'd always found babies hideous. That disquieting smell, that awkward, flabby helplessness, that obscene urgency. It was a mystery to me why women homed in on these creatures, why they cooed and purred over them the way they do at nothing else. Some helpless infantile closet part of me resented it: why weren't they cooing and purring over me?
>
> Pressing the flesh was all it took. Caring for Thomas only a few weeks, I grew new possibilities of intimacy. Caring for babies is a physical language. No wonder no one could tell. I caught myself in strange involuntary Mona Lisa smiles. I learned to relax a baby by caressing it. I found myself secretly touching parts of Thomas I'd never imagined I could.
>
> You speak to babies with your hands and I became fluent and uninhibited. So much touching, so much naked tactile honesty became profound relief--a living syntax of feeling always before mute. Before Thomas was born I worried what feelings for a male child might be ominously homosexual--that's how abstract men are brought up to be. Now as I kissed Thomas' body, nibbling him into shrieks of pleasured laughter, I thought only that baby skin smelled as clean as pebbles in a stream.

If Father Number Two discovers why women "homed in on these creatures," if he discovers his own capacity for nurturance, he also discovers what women are continually made to feel guilty about. He confronts the <u>limits</u> of his capacity to nurture, the extent of his feelings of resentment, anger, even rage:

> Increasingly, Thomas seemed to be screaming when I got back from work. Or when I had urgent work at home. . . .His playpen and crib crawled with crumbs, filthy toys, and soiled sheets. There was food everywhere in the house. His clothes were always filthy. He needed to be changed. I came to feel that I had to do everything at home and still be the one working to pay for it all.

Do some of you doubt that Number Two is really a father? Are you thinking, perhaps, only a mother knows such things, feels such resentment. Here's another clue: Father Number Two's rage at being trapped as a single parent almost drives him to drown Thomas.

Let me end this exam with an easy one.

<u>Father Number Three</u>: One of the things Father Number Three learns by way of taking care of his six-year-old is how to make french toast. He also learns how much it means to him to really know his child, how much fuller--albeit more complicated--life is when he balances his work with fatherhood. Father Number Three comes to realize that he can't really know his child unless he shares the french-

toast making and school-play going and all the sundry things that go with really being responsible for child care. On the advice of his lawyer, he holds off contesting custody until he has made up a list of all the pros and cons of being a single parent. There do not seem to be many pros:

> (He) believed the fact that he had to take care of Billy had made him more responsible and more successful in his work. . . .He tried to think of something else and he could not. He was blocked. He could not come up with any other reasons for keeping Billy. No reasons. Nothing rational. Only feelings. The hours together, the long, tiring, intimate hours of the two of them....
>
> He is part of my life now. And I love him.

End of examination. Please close your blue book. Here are the answers, in reverse order.

Father Number Three, as I'm sure most of you know, is Ted Kramer, described here not from the movie, Kramer v. Kramer, but from the novel by Avery Corman. (I'm a purist.)[3]

Father Number Two is Matthew Vole, from Robert Miner's incredibly powerful novel, Mother's Day.[4]

And Father Number One, of course, is Garp, from John Irving's bestseller, The World According To Garp.[5]

I draw your attention to these fictional fathers because I think they tell us something important about fatherhood in the 80's, or at least about our cultural imagery of fatherhood. Garp, Matthew Vole, and Ted Kramer represent the clearest delineation we have to date of a new image of fatherhood, an image that has been slowly coming into focus over the last ten years. In the New Fatherhood, men begin to learn, firsthand, what it means to be a parent; men begin to understand a world women have always lived in; men begin to experience new parts of themselves as new feelings get drawn out, whether they like them or not, by their children

Because of the enormous commercial success of the movie, Kramer v. Kramer, we will be seeing more and more images of such new fathers in the 1980's--in the movies, on t.v., in novels--fathers doing what mothers have always done, fathers

feeling what mothers have always felt. The big discovery of the 1980's, what might be called the Kramerization of American Fatherhood, is what some of us have known--and even written about--for a long time: that men can care for children.

This is hopeful, is it not? These images of a new fatherhood suggest to us possibilities for more shared experience--more cooperation--between men and women. And yet, let me remind you, in the most fully realized fictional images we have to date, men only come to understand what childrearing is about because their women have left them, either literally or figuratively, to do it alone. Joanna Kramer walks out on Ted, Cindy Vole leaves her husband Matthew, and Garp's wife Helen agreed to have a child "only if Garp would take care of it."

Is initiation to the New Fatherhood possible, ironically, only when women walk away? Why do we not have more prevalent cultural images of men and women sharing, finding possibilities for cooperation, in two-parent families, two-worker families, even joint-custody families? Is going it alone the only way for men to learn, the only way for men to reclaim their nurturant selves?

I raise these questions not as matters of literary or film criticism but because I think novels and film illuminate, in a very telling way, one of the major dilemmas of parenthood in the 1980's: both the possibility and the problem of getting fathers more involved in child care. For even as it becomes clear in our cultural imagery that men <u>can</u> care for children, we are seeing relatively little increase in such care in families where men and women actually live together.

How much change is going on in real life?

As some of you may know, collection and interpretation of the data necessary to answer this question are riddled with difficulties. Without getting into methodological complexities, let me make two points. First, although men's involvement in housework and child care is increasing, such increases--in absolute amounts of time--are very slight. According to data analysis by Dr. John Robinson, of Cleveland State University, husbands in 1965 were, on the average, spending 9.0 hours

per week on housework and child care; in 1975 they had increased to 9.7 hours per week; i.e., the decade between 1965 and 1975 saw fathers increase their share of family work by about 6 minutes per day.[6] Second, according to my Wellesley colleague, Dr. Joseph Pleck, it is not at all clear that husbands increase their sharing when their wives take employment outside the home.[7] If it seems as though men are doing more, it may be because women are doing less. Between 1965 and 1975, employed wives decreased their weekly involvement in housework and child care from 28.8 hours per week to 24.9 hours per week.[8]

These figures are not meant to deny the existence of a substantial minority of men who are sharing considerably more in child care. The point is, once again, that the image of the New Fatherhood, the image of the nurturant participating father that is appearing and that will increasingly be appearing in our fictive life is considerably outpacing reality. To put it another way, taking one's husband to see Kramer v. Kramer is not necessarily going to guarantee that he, like Dustin Hoffman, emerges a changed man by the end of the movie.

Why is it so hard to change? Is it just that men are heels? Do women have to leave their men--as some of the fictional images suggest--for their men to change?

There are, of course, lots of reasons, all of which can't be adquately covered today. However, I would like to sketch out a few because I think that the difficulty of getting fathers more involved in child care is a major challenge of the 1980's, for individual men and women and for the whole society.

One reason for the difficulty is that most men think that they are already involved. Indeed, according to Joseph Pleck's analysis of national survey data on male attitudes, there is no doubt that men feel an enormous amount of involvement in their family roles, as opposed to their paid work; i.e., they feel very psychologically and emotionally invested in their families. Unfortunately, such feelings are of little consolation to their wives. To put it differently, men think they are involved because they don't really see or understand the work of child care. What

women do when they take care of children is, in a sense, invisible to men.

A second and related reason for the difficulty of involving men in child care is that men simply cannot imagine how they can do their work and do child care. As Dr. Mirra Komarovsky found out in her study of seniors at Columbia University--published as Dilemmas of Masculinity--and as I find out continually in my discussions at college campuses throughout the country, egalitarianism in the young male seems to shut off, like the picture on a t.v. screen, somewhere around the eighth month of pregnancy.

As Komarovsky put it:

> The seniors have accepted the ideal of sexual equality in public spheres. The vast majority no longer questioned women's rights to equal access to promotions and rewards in the most highly valued occupational and political positions. But this endorsement of equal opportunities coexisted with one traditional principle: 'The major responsibility for childrearing is the mother's.' For all the cooperation they were prepared to offer, their wives were expected to be the childrearers and the homemakers.[9]

There appears to be a bit of a chicken-and-egg problem here. Not having had role models for male participation in childrearing, men can't imagine themselves doing it; but not imagining themselves doing it means that they are probably unlikely to do so.

Third, even if men do have the imagination to see a different role for themselves, the structure of work and the persisting differential in men's and women's pay makes it very difficult for men and women to share more. Given the occupational segregation in our society, families must often be willing to face severe cutbacks in income if fathers are going to be more involved in child care. And even if they are willing to do so, they may not be able to.

Consider, if you will, a recent case brought to my attention by an attorney in another state. He had read my book, Who Will Raise the Children?, and he wanted to know if I could help him negotiate with his law firm to get a reduced work schedule. We worked together on a brief to present to the law firm, which eventually said "yes," sort of, that is. They went along with it to some extent. He

could reduce to three-fifths time, but he would have to go from being an associate to being a "part-time attorney" for one year and there would be no guarantee that he would have his job at the end of that year. That's a pretty rough dilemma for him and for his wife as well because it may mean losing most of their income.

Last, but not least, I think many women are really ambivalent about increasing participation by fathers in childrearing. The most frequent question I am asked by women when I lecture around the country is "How can I get my husband more involved with the child care?" And when I ask, in turn, "Have you told him you want him to be?," the most frequent answer I get is "No." (It is, of course, quite understandable for women not to want to give up an important area of control in a society which has denied them access to power or control in other areas of male dominance.)

The trick in this presentation is how to end it, for I have, in a sense, painted myself into a corner. Having surrounded myself with obstacles to increased father participation, where do I go from here? But, of course, the image of being painted into a corner is the same for our whole society. Where do we go from here?

While there are no simple answers, I do think we have a lot to learn by looking at the images of the New Fatherhood, the images of protagonists like Ted Kramer and Matthew Vole and Garp. They are, I would suggest, and I hope, images of a society in transition, a society just beginning to create a new idea of fatherhood as it began, some fifteen years ago, to create a new idea of motherhood. For I don't think we are going to find the solutions to sharing and cooperation by creating an imagery of fatherhood where women are absent. That is, the solution is not to do a reversal where men become the "mothers" and women are out of the family. I think the real task of the next decade is not just to bring into focus a new image of fatherhood, but a new image of family functioning that includes mothers and fathers.

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2. Sandra Hofferth, "The Implications for Child Care," in Ralph Smith, ed., Women in the Labor Force in 1990 (Washington, D.C.: Urban Institute, 1979), pp. 98-99.

3. Avery Corman, Kramer versus Kramer (New York: Signet, 1977), pp. 188-189.

4. Robert Miner, Mother's Day (New York: Richard Marek, 1978), pp. 39-40.

5. John Irving, The World According to Garp (New York: Pocket Books, 1978).

6. John P. Robinson, Changes in Americans' Use of Time: 1965-1975. A Progress Report (Cleveland: Cleveland State University Communication Research Center, August 1977).

7. Joseph Pleck and Michael Rustad, "Husbands' and Wives' Time Use in Paid Work and the Family, in the 1975-76 Study of Time Use," (Wellesley, Mass.: Center for Research on Women, unpublished paper, 1980).

8. Id.

9. Mirra Komarovsky, Dilemmas of Masculinity (New York: Norton, 1975), p. 251.

WOMEN AND MEN IN THE 1980S: NEW FORMS OF CONFLICT, NEW FORMS OF COOPERATION

Carol Gilligan

While "Kramer vs. Kramer" is hardly an auspicious beginning for a discussion of women's lives in the eighties, it suggests that parenthood in this decade may bring new forms of conflict between women and men and give rise to the need for new forms of cooperation in the relations between the sexes. While the film clearly is unfairly cast as a battle between the sexes, it goes on to demonstrate the limits of fairness in resolving parental disputes. Thus in the end, its power lies in depicting the education of both Kramers toward the ability to see the needs of their child and to respond to those needs with generosity and care.

The question, however, is why in a film that is a paean to the values of women's world, this education is shown to take place largely at the woman's expense. We begin to suspect that little has changed when we notice that Mrs. Kramer's distress serves as the occasion for Mr. Kramer's growth, initiating for him an heroic journey through the landscape of woman's world, a picaresque travel through kitchens and playgrounds whose color sharply contrasts with the drab portrayal of Mrs. Kramer's venture into the qualified world of paid work. If the film, like the novels that herald the eighties, suggests that the transit of women and men into the territory of one another's domain occurs at the price of the relationship between them and at a cost to their child, we may ask whether the problem partially lies in the failure to see what the women are doing or to hear what they are saying with sympathy rather than scorn.

In addressing the relationship between the sexes as the scene in the eighties for new forms of conflict but also the setting for new forms of growth, I suggest

that cooperation between men and women depends on understanding the different perspectives of each. Thus while the current ethic of equality has removed certain constraints from relations between the sexes, a broader ethic of equity is needed to sustain cooperation in family relationships. My analysis in this presentation is based on the findings of my research that men and women typically bring different conceptions of self and morality to the world they jointly inhabit. These different perceptions of social reality are manifest in the use of two different languages, the language of rights and the language of responsibilities that share an overlapping moral vocabulary but attach different meanings to its words. While the complementarity of these languages may be, for both sexes, the discovery of maturity, the propensity for mistranslation between them gives rise to misunderstanding in the relations between the sexes.

To demonstrate this misunderstanding at work, I begin by creating scenes from three marriages to show how with the best of intentions couples can arrive at seemingly insoluble disputes. In Couple Number One, the man and the woman love one another and respond to each other with respect and care. The man considers his wife to be a mature and responsible person toward whom he acts with the same consideration he would want others to show toward himself. Respecting her autonomy and her integrity as a person separate from him, he considers her able to take care of herself and to make her own decisions in life. When in moments of crisis, she turns to him for support, he assures her that she should do what she wants, indicating his willingness to respect whatever decision she chooses to make.

The woman in this marriage similarly responds to her husband with love and care, attempting to anticipate and meet his needs and to do the things she senses he wants. In various ways, she helps him achieve the goals that he has set for himself in life, providing whatever assistance she can and protecting him from other demands. When conflict threatens to disrupt his life, she tries to respond to his needs by settling problems in ways designed to protect the harmony of their relationship.

The problem between them arises because by love and respect they mean different things. Consequently, she experiences his care as neglect while he sees her concern as interference. Thus she considers him to be inattentive to her and unwilling to respond to her needs while he sees her as intruding in his life and failing to respect his autonomy. When they attempt to talk of these feelings, the tension between them only increases since each feels unjustly accused, unseen and unloved by the other.

In Couple Number Two, the man and the woman have decided to end their marriage but wish to separate in a way that sustains their mutual feelings of care and respect. In considering separation, the man assumes that the end of the marriage will leave them unchanged, each partner emerging from the relationship intact, the same person in a new situation. The wife, considering the marriage to be the context which defined their selves, sees in its end a loss of herself and wonders if she will find a new self.

Following their separation, the man discovers that something is missing from his life but is at a loss to understand what it is since he is sure that he had left nothing behind. In contrast, the woman, having assumed that she would leave everything behind, is surprised to discover that apart from her husband she remains a person recognizable to herself. Given their disparate experiences, this couple finds it increasingly difficult to talk since she does not understand his distress or his apparent need for relationship, while he is confused by her ability to manage and her desire to be alone. Each then begins to experience the other's reaction as a rejection and a betrayal since in ending the marriage she had assumed that he wanted to be more independent while he had considered her to be looking for someone on whom she could depend.

In Couple Number Three, the man considered himself to be a devoted husband and father, sacrificing himself to work long hours in order to care for his wife and child. The woman similarly saw herself as a devoted mother and wife, leaving

her job in order to take care of the daily needs of her husband and child. As the man becomes increasingly involved in his work and the child begins to go to school, the woman becomes isolated at home and feels increasing distress. Thus she begins to see her husband's absence from home as a sign of his irresponsibility while he considers her distress to be a manifestation of her lack of concern. As she attributes his late hours at work to his failure to care for her and the child, so he construes her departure from home as an abdication of her responsibility toward him and the child. Thus we see the Kramers in court, opponents in a custody dispute, battling for possession of their child whom each wishes to have at the other's expense.

What all of these scenes from a marriage portray is a systematic misunderstanding at work, eroding the fabric of relationship until two people who see themselves as caring and responsible confront in the other an image of self as lacking in care and concern. In each of the couples, the man and the woman speak different languages they assume are the same, using similar words to encode disparate experiences of self and social relationship. For example, while both partners in Couple Number One consider themselves to be living in the same marriage relationship, their conceptions of relationship radically diverge. To the man, relationship means reciprocity between two separate, autonomous people while to the woman relationship means connection between two people who are interdependent. To him, dependence means lack of autonomy while to her, independence means lack of connection. Consequently, both experience themselves to be caring but mean by care disparate things, he a respect for her integrity and she a responsiveness to his needs. Given these differing assumptions, it is easy to see how misunderstanding begins to rend this marriage with conflicts that threaten both partners with the danger of losing their sense of themselves, he through the erosion of his autonomy, she through the failure of her connection. As the wife increasingly sees her husband as cold and incapable of response while he sees her as manipulative and out to

control, the relationship between them begins to negate the qualities each values most in him/herself.

Since the conception of self in relation to others is the center of social and moral understanding, these two different languages refract not only disparate experiences of self---as separate or connected---but also different conceptions of morality---an ethic of justice based on a notion of rights and an ethic of care based on a notion of responsibilities. The language of rights articulates a morality of justice that balances the claims of separate persons while the language of responsibilities articulates an ethic of care that sustains a network of interrelationship. These disparate visions, however, in their tension reflect the paradoxical truth of social experience, that we know ouselves as separate only insofar as we live in connection with others and that we experience relationship only insofar as we differentiate self from other.

As we begin to see the complementarity of the experiences of separation and attachment and discern the refraction of their psychological truths in the ethical ideals of justice and care, we recognize not only how justice protects separation while care sustains relationship but also how the tension between them is manifest in disparate modes of language and thought. Thus justice, reflecting the experience of separation and striving toward an ideal of equality, relies on the logic of fairness which gives rise to the language of rights. Care, in contrast, stems from attachment and strives toward an ideal of connection, relying on the psychological logic of relationships that informs the language of responsibilities. As the morality of rules is formal and abstract, operating through principles of equality and reciprocity, so the ethic of relationship is narrative and contextual, tracing a process that unfolds through time and is shaped by the situation in which it takes place. Thus the universal logic of rules and rights contrasts with the contextual understanding of responsibilities and relationships, reflecting disparate modes of experience and thought that run through the course of human development.

While the experiences of attachment and separation are universal in human life, these experiences appear to be differentially tied to the structures of male and female personality. Chodorow, observing that women have been primarily responsible for infant and early child care, attributes the recurrent sex differences in personality to the different dynamics of male and female gender identity formation. Within the context of the primary mother-child relationship, masculinity is defined by separation and tied to the differentiation of self while femininity is defined through continuing connection and leads to "a fusion of identification and object choice." (Chodorow, 1978, p. 166) Consequently, for boys, development entails "a more emphatic individuation and a more defensive firming of ego boundaries... (while) girls emerge from (this) early period with a basis for 'empathy' built into their primary definition of self." (Chodorow, 1978, p. 166-7)

The observation that male identity is affirmed through the experience of separation while female identity instead depends on the experience of connection corroborates my finding that males tend to rely on a language of rights and construct moral problems as conflicts between individual claims, while females tend to use a language of responsibilities and see moral problems as arising from conflicting relationships. While each sex has access through experience to both forms of language and thought, the analytic logic of justice may be more closely tied to the masculine sense of separate identity, while the contextual narrative of care may be more attuned to the feminine sense of self in relationship.

When these disparate perceptions of self and social reality converge, as in relations between the sexes, their disjunction can give rise to misunderstanding and conflict in the ways that we have seen, but their counterpoint can also facilitate the discovery of the complementarity of their separate truths. We see the beginnings of this discovery as the man and the woman in Couple Number Two come to experience the reality that the other had known, of separation and of interdependence. Similarly the Kramers in crossing over to live in the world that the

other had formerly inhabited see the realities that had informed the other's conception of self and family relationship.

In the 1980s as more women experience the lifting of societal constraints that had bound them in relationships of dependence on men or left them vulnerable and without adequate support, they gain access to the language of justice and rights and to the experience of equality which it reflects. This experience, however, is differently understood in the context of women's lives, given the social realities they face and their underlying sense of self in connection. Thus the language of justice and rights comes into dialogue with the language of responsibilities and care, and this dialogue elucidates women's changing experience of self and social relationship. Through a counterpoint of languages, women begin to ask if it is selfish or just to include themselves within the compass of their moral concern and question whether it is irresponsible or fair to assert one's claims at another's expense. Through this interplay, the experience of equality expands women's conception of an ethic of care, while the concern with responsibility infuses their perception of justice in situations of adversarial relationship.

In this light, the observation that women may fear success and often do not play by the rules may indicate among women not a neurotic problem or a tendency to favor devious means but rather a different moral perspective on competitive social relationships that sees the cost to winner and loser in a situation where someone is hurt. Thus women, entering the world of men's work, call attention to its lack of care, charting the cost of rules that sustain an order of indifference to human relationship.

At the same time, for women participation in work that is recognized by society with status and pay may lead them to see their own claims as separate and worthy of their direct consideration. The experience of equality may then come to expose the contradictions in women's psychology whereby they see themselves as capable of

caring for others but unable to take care of themselves, or consider themselves responsible for the actions of others while holding others responsible for the choices they make. Thus women begin to question a morality that equates goodness with caring only for others and leads them to measure their own worth by reflection in others' willingness to take care of them. As the opposition of selfishness and morality dissolves with the inclusion of self in the moral domain, the ethic of care correspondingly expands from an injunction not to hurt others to a moral ideal of non-violent relationship.

In challenging the conventions whereby morality has been seen either as altruistic self-sacrifice or as a fair balancing of separate claims, an ethic of relationship informs a more generative mode of cooperation and of care. While the narrative of moral development has in the past been traced through changes in the consciousness and practice of rules, my research expands this narrative to include changes in the consciousness and practice of relationships. Thus girls, in their games of inclusion and exclusion and in their elaboration of networks of social relationship, elucidate the development of an understanding of care just as boys in their games of elaborate rules reveal the development of the concept of fairness.

If women through their development illuminate the path to a less violent mode of life, it may be because their experience of connection heightens the reality of interdependence so that they come to know more about relationships and about the dynamic of interaction. Thus the ethic of care which girls and women articulate and their persisting concern with avoiding harm indicate through their development a growing awareness that in a world of people who are interconnected care is generative for everyone involved while violence, reverberating through a network of relationship, is in the end destructive for all.

However, this knowledge conflicts with the assumption that morality for women consists of caring for others, so that the woman who acts on her own behalf is judged selfish and is socially at risk. Thus we begin to understand the portrayal of Mrs.

Kramer at the start of the film as a selfish woman whose moral qualification can be erased only by an act of self-sacrifice. And yet, both judgments of selfishness and sacrifice proceed from the assumption that self and other are opposed so that caring for self is at expense to others, while caring for others is at cost to the self.

As we begin to question this assumption, we can see Mrs. Kramer in a different light and in this different illumination the narrative of the film shifts from an epic of justice to a story of care. While the lighter side of this story is told through Mr. Kramer who, for $3,000, can have it both ways, the darker side is revealed in Mrs. Kramer who faces the conflict of impossible choice. My intention in briefly recapitulating the story is not only to elucidate her perspective but also to show through the tattered strands of this marriage a line of development in family relationship.

In her radical departure, Mrs. Kramer explains that her inability to care for herself has left her unable to care for her child, so that while she can see no way of not hurting herself, she hopes that in leaving she will protect him. Thus what to Mr. Kramer appears an outrageous act of personal liberation, to Mrs. Kramer seems instead a desperate effort at responsibility and care. Since from the beginning both Kramers assumed that they knew the nature of the other's experience, they see little need for communication and thus fail to recognize their lack of connection. Even when Mr. Kramer comes through experience to learn what it can mean to take care of a child, while Mrs. Kramer comes to discover that she can take care of herself, neither can see that the other has changed despite the awareness of change in themselves.

In their disappointment over the other's failure to perceive and respond to their need for the child, the Kramers set out as equals to assert their rights and arrive at the impasse of a custody dispute. In the prisoner's dilemma of the custody battle, the limits of equality are soon revealed, since there is no scale for balanc-

ing different relationships, and fairness runs out in dividing a child.

In the courtroom, then, a counterpoint begins as the judge attempts blindly to weigh separate claims while the Kramers see in their shared concern the frayed line of their continuing connection. As they look at each other directly they discern the integrity of the other's position and modulate their adversarial proceeding to protect the other's vulnerability. With the ability to see one another comes a new mode of care for their child that recognizes through him the reality of ongoing family relationship. Thus Mr. Kramer, in preparing Billy to make the court-ordered move to his mother's house, perceives his need to be loyal to both parents and responds to that need with generosity and care. Similarly, Mrs. Kramer, seeing Billy's need for continuity in his life, responds to his need by relinquishing her right to disrupt the order of his current relationships.

While her action can be construed as an heroic self-sacrifice that expiates a former lack of concern, it can also be seen as reflecting her continuing awareness of the tie between her and her child. Then Mrs. Kramer begins to appear neither selfish nor selfless in her concern, since the needs of her child are joined to her own through the connection of their relationship. Thus her dilemma, at beginning and end, poses not a choice of self vs. other but rather a problem of how to act responsibly when there is no way of caring that does not cause hurt.

The failure to see the different reality of women's lives and to hear the differences in their voices stems from the assumption that there is a single mode of social experience and interpretation. By positing, instead, two different modes, we arrive at a more complex rendition of human experience that sees the truth of separation and attachment in the lives of women and men but recognizes as well their differential refraction in the languages of responsibilities and rights. To understand how the tension between these languages sustains a dialectic of justice and care is to see the integrity of two disparate modes of interpretation that are in the end interdependent. Thus the dialogue of these languages not only informs

a better understanding of relations between the sexes but also provides a basis for a more equitable conception of family relationships.

Given the freeing of marriage from external constraints and the prevalence of an ethic of social equality, parenthood in the eighties can be expected to bring new forms of conflict between men and women by limiting freedom and by imposing responsibilities that often cannot be equally divided. At the same time, since equality tends to limit cooperation to simple reciprocity, parenthood may provide the occasion for the growth of generosity and care. Since a child brings home the reality of difference and underlines the fact of interconnection, parenthood reconstructs the network of relationship which the language of rights dissolves. Thus if the past decade has witnessed the development of a greater equality between women and men that secures for each a personal integrity, the hope of the eighties lies in the vision of new forms of cooperation and new modes of relationship.

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GROWING UP IN THE 1980'S

Michael Lamb

Today I would like to discuss several nontraditional family styles that have become prominent within the last decade. In analyzing role-sharing, dual-career/dual-worker, role-reversing, and single-parent families, I shall focus upon the paternal roles implicit in these family styles, and will review their likely effects on child development. These family styles are all marked by deviation from the traditional level of paternal involvement. I propose to consider each of these styles in turn, proceeding from the arrangement involving least to the arrangement involving most paternal commitment.

The two commonest deviations from the traditional family norm involve a) families that are headed by single mothers and b) families in which both parents work outside the home. We will thus open this section with discussions of these two types of families.

Single motherhood

The number of single parent families has risen dramatically over the last few decades; the latest statistics indicate that about half of the children in the U.S. will spend or have spent some portion of their childhood in a single parent family. For 90% of them, the single parent will be their mother.

To the extent that they do not have a spouse to supplement their parenting efforts, single mothers and fathers are in a similar predicament, with lack of supervision and control being possible consequences. Further, in all single parent families, one major sex role model is absent. In addition, however, most sin-

gle women lack the training and experience to obtain satisfying and financially rewarding jobs, so they are likely to be in worse economic circumstances than single fathers. When the children involved are young, community attitudes are often less supportive of single mothers working than of single fathers. Finally, social isolation often occurs either because former friends of the couple withdraw or because the mother's primary entree into a social network was through the ex-husband's work associates. These factors combine to make the predicament of many single mothers especially stressful.

As long as these social and economic stresses remain, single mothers are likely to be less effective, consistent, and sensitive as parents, and this is likely to distort relationships with their children and have adverse effects on their psychological adjustment (e.g., Vaughn, Waters, Egeland & Sroufe, 1979). We cannot say with any certainty how many of the adverse consequences of father absence would be eliminated if single mothers could count on less financially stressful circumstances and they were less isolated from social networks. However, increasing numbers of women combine working and mothering and these women thus retain independent sources of income and access to social networks. The effects of divorce (and subsequent single parenthood) are likely to be much less for these mothers and their children. Nevertheless, marital dissolution per se is inherently stressful and so at least temporary disturbances of psychological functioning are inevitable. Hetherington, Cox, and Cox (1978) have described the emotional and psychological sequelae of divorce for both parents and children. Their study showed that the first year was most stressful for all concerned, but that (at least in their affluent and rather select samples) indices of stress were returning to normal by two years.

Over the last three decades, there have been numerous studies of children raised by single mothers in the guise of research on father absence (see Lamb, 1976; Biller, 1971, 1974, 1976 for reviews). Although researchers now question

whether the absence of a male model satisfactorily accounts for the effects observed, it is fairly clear that children (especially boys) raised by single mothers are "at risk." Boys raised by single mothers are more likely than those from two parent families to be less masculine, more psychologically maladjusted, delinquent, and hyper- or hypo-aggressive. Girls too may reveal deficits in their ability to interact with males, although these effects may not be evident prior to adolescence even when the father's absence occurred much earlier (Hetherington, 1972). We do know that the availability of alternative male models (e.g., stepfather, older brothers, uncles, grandfathers) can reduce the adverse effects on sex role development (see Biller, 1974) although few substitute relationships match the intensity of close father-child relationships.

We must mention two other findings, however. First, marital disharmony appears to have more deleterious effects, especially on boys, than does divorce and father absence (Block, Block & Morrison, 1980; Lamb, 1977b; Rutter, 1979). It is conceivable, therefore, that some of the effects of father absence may be consequences of the marital hostility that preceded marital dissolution. Second, psychological father absence (which occurs when fathers are seldom available to their children) and physical father absence have qualitatively similar effects on sex role development (Blanchard & Biller, 1971). Likewise, distant or hostile fathers and absent fathers have qualitatively similar (though quantitatively different) effects on moral development (Hoffman, 1970). In other words, if our goal is to minimize psychological damage to developing children, a single mother is often the most desirable of the reasonable alternatives. Furthermore, it is important not to exaggerate the ill-effects of single motherhood and father absence. Even though studies demonstrate statistically significant effects, many of the individuals in the groups under study do not deviate notably from the norm. Single mothers who cope despite adverse circumstances provide their children with remarkably good models.

Dual-career and dual-worker families

By definition (Rapoport & Rapoport, 1976), a dual-career family is one in which both husband and wife are highly committed to progressing and excelling in their chosen careers. Professional success is the major criterion whereby such persons evaluate their self-worth, and professional success typically demands an extensive investment of time and effort. In order to satisfactorily fulfill their professional obligations, dual-career couples must sacrifice leisure activities, streamline home-care routines, and (in all likelihood) relax their housekeeping standards. Time, in sum, is at a premium in these families, and time is precisely what dependent children require. Furthermore, professional demands are at their height when careers are being launched, which means that career and child-rearing demands are usually greatest at the same time. Dual-worker families differ from dual-career families in the nature of the work involved. Neither spouse is pursuing a profession, and work thus demands less of a time commitment than does career pursuit. For the most part, however, the father's role in dual-career and dual-worker families varies across a comparable range with comparable consequences. For this reason, we shall consider dual-career and dual-worker families together.

Child care involves a considerable investment of time. Upon deciding to have children, therefore, dual-career and dual-worker couples have to determine how the additional responsibilities can be met. For the purposes of the present analysis, we shall presume that neither parent withdraws from work, and thus that alternative (extra-familial) arrangements for childcare are sought.[1] Nevertheless, in the early mornings and in the evenings there are a substantial number of child-care and child-related tasks demanding attention. The available statistics indicate that primary responsibility for child care is almost invariably assumed by wives even when

[1]The nature and quality of the substitute caretaker(s) undoubtedly affect the child's emotional, social, and cognitive development, but these issues will not be addressed here. The interested reader may refer to Ricciuti (1976), Schwarz (1975), and Bronfenbrenner (1974) for reviews of the relevant literature.

both parents work, but that there is great variation in the extent to which fathers participate in child care. We shall consider the cases of highly involved and minimally involved fathers separately in the following paragraphs.

When the husband of a working woman assumes traditional paternal and marital roles, the direct impact he has on his children's development is likely to resemble that of the traditional husband of a home-making mother. He may "help out" with caretaking upon occasion, but generally limits himself to playful interaction in the evenings and to attempts at disciplining older children. Traditional fathers typically see housework, like child care, as their wives' domain. Such attitudes appear more common in dual-worker families, in which both spouses may view maternal employment as a regrettable financial necessity, than in dual-career families. They may also occur in dual-career families, however, wherein the husband views with suspicion attempts to combine motherhood and employment. In either case, lack of practical assistance and emotional support for the working mother maximizes the strain to which she is subjected. She is likely to become angry with her husband, resentful of the child, frustrated about her apparent inability to meet her professional and maternal role obligations simultaneously, and guilty about the possible effects of her employment upon the child. All these emotions will surely be translated into less sensitive and appropriate interactions with the child (Lamb, Chase-Lansdale & Owen, 1979; Lamb, Owen & Chase-Lansdale, 1979b). When her husband fails to assume significant domestic responsibilities, furthermore, the working mother has little time available for unhurried interaction with the child since there are multiple competing demands upon her time. The child of such a mother can clearly be deemed "at risk." Neither of its parents are able or willing to commit much time to it, and the interaction that it has with its mother is hurried, insensitive, and dominated by routine activities like feeding and bathing. Father, meanwhile, is not consistently sensitive to the child's needs because he does not define this as within his province. Insecure parent-child attachments are probable

consequences. The extent of psychosocial damage suffered by the child may vary depending on the opportunities it has to establish secure relationships with more dependable and sensitive persons -- such as substitute caretakers or siblings.

The father is likely to have the same effect on the sex role development of his children as the traditional husband of a homemaking mother would. Even if his behavior can be deemed acceptably or "appropriately" masculine, however, this father is certainly not a model of empathy or altruism. Furthermore, the pattern of heterosexual interaction that these parents portray is marked by resentment and lack of emotional support and thus comprises a poor example for their child to emulate.

Consider now the more supportive and less traditional husband of a working woman. By assuming partial responsibility for home and/or child care, such a husband relieves his wife of some of her responsibilities, freeing her time for more unhurried interaction with the child. To the extent that the husband's participation signifies approval and emotional support, furthermore, the working woman is less likely to feel guilty about her employment or angry about her husband's commitment to the family. For both these reasons, the husband's participation has a beneficial impact on the mother-child relationship, and so affects the child's development indirectly.

When the available time is limited, and too great a proportion of it is spent performing chores, this enhancement of the mother-child relationship may be achieved only by severely limiting the amount of father-child interaction. In such cases, the amount of father-child interaction may fall below the threshold amount necessary to permit relationships to develop. Fortunately, this seems unlikely, since the committed father of whom we are talking is unlikely to allow his relationship with the child to be compromised by household chores or other responsibilities.

If we consider the specific aspects of personality development to which paternal contributions appear most salient, it is possible to make specific pre-

dictions about the way children will be affected. In general, the involved fathers in dual-career or dual-worker families are more actively involved in parenting than traditional fathers are, and they are committed to participative parenthood. Their support for their wives' careers and their "sex-inappropriate" commitment to active parenthood both indicate that they do not conform to or value traditional sex-role stereotypes. If anything, these fathers may well be committed to the popularization of androgynous or nontraditional sex roles.

When considering the likely effects on child development, the first question surely is: If both parents are extensively involved in caretaking and homemaking, do they provide gender-differentiated models with whom children can identify appropriately? In extreme cases (e.g., role-sharing families), they probably do not, but (as we shall argue later) there is no reason to presume that a child's development will be deleteriously affected if s/he identified primarily with an androgynous model provided that the person's gender identity is secure. In other words, it is important that a model be sufficiently secure in and comfortable with his/her masculinity or femininity, and sufficiently self-assured that s/he does not feel anxious about or threatened by the deviant behavior.

The next question we need to address is the following: What factors will account for or ensure identification with the same-sex parent anyway? In traditional families, fathers interact with boys preferentially from birth (Parke, 1979), but there is a dramatic accentuation of this tendency around the time of the child's first birthday (Lamb, 1977a). This marked sex-differentiation seems to occur because the father begins at that time to perceive the child as a "little boy" rather than a "little baby," and he sees it as his responsibility to teach it how to behave accordingly. Mothers do not differentiate between sons and daughters so clearly -- they continue to interact equivalently with both boys and girls. By increasing the amount of attention accorded to sons, and (less dramatically) by becoming less accessible to infant daughters, therefore, fathers serve to focus young children's

attention on the same-sex parental model: Fathers become more salient to sons, mothers to daughters. Fathers continue to be more accessible to sons than to daughters through the next several years (Lamb et al., 1979a). They also encourage conformity to sex-role stereotypes more insistently and consistently than mothers do. These pressures appear to be effective, for from the end of the second year boys appear to prefer interaction with, and to selectively identify with, their fathers (Lamb, 1977a); girls establish appropriate preferences more slowly, though they are typically established before four years of age (Lynn & Cross, 1974).

The father who is extensively involved in caretaking may fail to treat sons and daughters so differently. Since his own behavior is not congruent with the traditional "masculine" role, he will be less concerned than the traditional father that his son come to behave like a "real boy" and his daughter like a "real girl." Furthermore, the actual role he plays in relation to his child resembles that of the traditional mother more than it resembles that of the traditional father. Traditional mothers, as noted previously, appear to be less concerned than fathers are about the adoption of gender-appropriate behavior (Bronfenbrenner, 1961; Goodenough, 1957; Heilbrun, 1965; Tasch, 1955). There are two likely reasons for this and both apply to non-traditional (caretaking) fathers just as they do to traditional mothers. First, as females in a male-dominated society, mothers have less invested in the perpetuation of traditional gender roles than most men do. Non-traditional fathers, like them, will not encourage their children to behave in accordance with gender role prescriptions that they have chosen to violate themselves. Second, Lederer (1964) argues that responsibility for ensuring the physical care and well-being of a child serves to minimize concerns about gender-appropriate behavior, and this may apply to non-traditional fathers as well as it does to traditional mothers.

Most of the evidence regarding dual-career families indicates that the parents continue to have somewhat sex-stereotyped roles even when both are somewhat involved in child care (Hoffman, 1977). Further, the two parents are likely to be secure in

their masculinity and femininity, and will strive to ensure that their children also develop secure gender identities. The best prediction is that they will encourage their children to take the same-sex parent as a primary identification figure in order to ensure this, but they will also be at pains to point out that there is much about the other parent to emulate as well. Although there are no empirical data available regarding gender role and gender identity development in children with highly participative fathers, we are confident that this population cannot be deemed "at risk." As social learning theorists would predict, the children of working mothers have less stereotyped sex roles than children whose mothers do not work (see Hoffman, 1979), but this must be deemed advantageous rather than disadvantageous in contemporary society.

If there is still some desire for or pressure toward same-sex identification, the actively participative father is a more salient model for his son than a traditional father would be. Empirical and theoretical considerations indicate that the likelihood of identification increases in line with the warmth and nurturance of the model's behavior toward the child (Bandura, 1977; Mussen, 1967). In any event, the boy is likely to learn an expressive form of masculinity, and his own gender role (until it is reshaped by the conservative influences of peers and of the media) is likely to be a tolerant and androgynous one. Meanwhile, a working mother may be a more respected model than a nonworking mother in today's society.

Reciprocal role theory proposes that girls acquire a feminine mode of behavior by learning to interact in complementary fashion with their fathers (Johnson, 1963). The less sex-stereotyped the father's role, the less sex-stereotyped the behavior needed to complement it. Thus the daughter of a participative father is likely to acquire a non-traditional sex role. Note also, of course, that her mother models such a role and her father evidently approves of it too.

We have talked at some length about modeling, identification, and role-complementing but we have said little about efforts to shape the child's behavior directly. The predictions here are simple. The participative father is likely

to encourage his children to emulate roles like those he and his wife portray instead of encouraging them to conform to traditional sex roles. Boys and girls will be taught to respect the potential of both males and females, and career-commitment is likely to be stressed for both sons and daughters.

In sum, there are three ways in which the participant father in a dual-career or dual-worker family contributes to the acquisition of non-traditional and somewhat androgynous sex roles by his children. First, he is less likely to encourage exclusive identification with the same-sex parent. Second, the roles both he and his wife portray are non-traditional roles incorporating both expressive and instrumental dimensions. Third, he is unlikely to encourage or value conformity to traditional sex roles.

There is one respect, however, in which dual-career (and to a lesser extent dual-worker) families may deviate from the traditional pattern: A child raised in such a family may well experience few instances of simultaneous interaction with both parents. Time is at such a premium that when either parent is interacting with the child, the other may use this as an opportunity to attend to other pressing responsibilities. Without regular family interaction, the child is deprived of the opportunity to see how its parents relate to one another, and so is less likely to develop a sense of familial coherence and unity.

The children who are at risk, we propose, are the children raised in dual-career or dual-worker families wherein fathers refuse to participate in household or caretaking tasks. As indicated earlier, a hostile relationship between the spouses is probable, and marital hostility is known to be harmful to children's psychosocial development (Lamb, 1977b). Such parents do not provide good examples of amicable heterosexual interaction. Although a son raised in such a family may identify with his father, his role model is probably denigrated rather than praised by his mother, and this is likely to detract from the salience of the father. The daughter, meanwhile, identifies with a harrassed and dissatisfied mother. As a result, she is

unlikely to feel content about her femininity, and her confusion will be magnified by the unempathic and/or disrespectful behavior and attitudes evidenced by her father in interaction with both mother and daughter.

The role-sharing family

The highly participative father in a dual-career or dual-worker family obviously exemplifies role-sharing. In the present section we shall briefly discuss those families in which the two parents explicitly decide to share responsibility for breadwinning, for child-rearing, and for housework. A role-sharing father does not perceive his involvement as "assistance" for his wife, as is often the case in dual-worker families; instead, it represents one manifestation of his commitment to active parenthood. Both he and his wife may reduce their work-involvement in order that child care can be performed within the family without reliance upon extrafamilial substitutes.

Although there is great variability in the degree of paternal commitment evidenced by fathers in dual-career and dual-worker families, role-sharing fathers are, by definition, deeply committed to active involvement in their children's rearing. They seek and assume a "feminine" role in childrearing and parenting, and clearly consider this to be part of their paternal role, not simply a concession to their wives' demands. Role-sharing fathers obviously have little invested in the perpetuation of traditional sex-roles, since they have explicitly chosen to adopt a nontraditional role.

The effects on children are likely to be similar to and -- if anything -- more dramatic than the effects of high father participation described in the previous section. Again, we predict that children will emulate and respect the nontraditional roles of their parents. They will be less masculine or feminine than the children being raised in traditional families, but in light of the changing societal demands discussed earlier, they are better prepared for the demands of some contemporary social niches than traditionally stereotyped children are.

Role reversal

The most radical and least common of nontraditional family styles is role reversal. When roles are reversed, it is the father who assumes full-time responsibility for homemaking and childrearing, while his wife becomes the economic provider. Typically, these arrangements occur because employment prospects are better for the wife than for her husband, and commitment to such a marital relationship represents acceptance -- however enthusiastically or resignedly -- of roles that violate the individual's prior expectations and those of family and friends. For role reversal to be successful, the gender identity of the male must be sufficiently secure that he can withstand the disapproval of the society.

As intimated earlier, it is popularly believed that the healthy development of children is compromised when their parents assume nontraditional roles (i.e., when their fathers are intimately involved in care-taking), and the predictions are most dire where role reversal is involved. Children, it is argued, are likely to be confused when their parents assume undifferentiated roles or roles that contrast with those observed in the wider society into which the children must be integrated. It is claimed that such children will not be able to develop coherent concepts of "appropriately" masculine and feminine behavior.

I do not believe that children raised by primary caretaking fathers -- in either single-parent or two-parent families -- are necessarily "at risk." In my opinion, the misguided predictions of negative consequences arise because of a continuing and widespread confusion of two concepts -- the concepts of gender role and gender identity. Gender identity refers to an individual's satisfaction with his/her gender. For example, to assess whether a woman's gender identity is secure, we might ask whether the woman is proud of the fact that she is a woman, and comfortable defining and perceiving herself as female. Insecure gender identity is marked by resentment about and dissatisfaction with one's gender. Gender role, by contrast, refers to the behavior of the individual. Generally, a male gender role involves

conformity to the demands of traditional masculinity and a female gender role involves conformity to the demands of traditional femininity. Security of gender identity need not be manifest by conformity to the traditional sex appropriate gender role. An individual whose gender identity is insecure, in fact, is more likely to conform rigidly to the traditional role strictures than is one whose gender identity is sufficiently secure that s/he can comfortably deviate from traditional role prescriptions. Women can be secure in their feminine gender identity and still have occupational aspirations. Similarly, role-reversing men may have securely masculine gender identities while assuming primary responsibility for child care within the family. "It is important not to confuse conformity to traditional sex-role prescriptions with the security of gender identity or with mental health. Provided an individual's gender identity is secure, a wide range of gender roles can be assumed. Thus, if children in nontraditional families identify with the same-sex parent and if that parent has a secure gender identity and evinces a coherent, if unusual, sex role, then no untoward consequences need occur" (Lamb, 1979, p. 942). This argument applies to all types of nontraditional family styles.

Although role reversal need not be harmful to children's development, however, we do not yet know how the acquisition of gender identity and the development of gender-role behavior will proceed in role-sharing and role-reversing families. The processes responsible for their development in traditional families cannot operate in the role-reversed family. We cannot account for the selection of the same-sex parent as the primary identification figure unless we can presume that sex-differentiating treatment occurs in these families as well. Current research by Lamb and Frodi on role-sharing and role-reversing families should clarify this issue.

Single fatherhood

Let us turn now to consideration of single fatherhood, the final type of nontraditional family style to be considered here. Most single fathers assume respon-

sibility for child-rearing as a result of marital dissolution through death or divorce. Single parenthood, as a result, typically begins with a period of emotional trauma for both child -- who is undergoing a painful separation from a parent -- and father, who, in most divorce cases, will have been involved in lengthy and unpleasant custody proceedings. At a time when the father is most emotionally drained and often least prepared for the demands of parenthood, therefore, he has to help his offspring negotiate these difficult times and adjust to the changed family circumstances. Hetherington's data show that single mothers and their children take more than a year to adjust to the new living circumstances (Hetherington, Cox & Cox, 1978), and there is no reason to presume that single fathers will adjust any more readily. Unfortunately, we know considerably less about mother absence and single fatherhood than about father absence and single motherhood. Levine's excellent book (1976) is nearly unique, and there have been no attempts at systematic and quantitative assessments of the long-term effects of being raised by a single father. Consequently, we must rely upon speculation, and upon implications of the literature on father absence.

Research on father absence (i.e., single motherhood) indicates that the absence of a father may produce anomalous gender role adoption, and an exaggerated masculinity indicating insecure gender identity (Biller, 1974, 1976). Daughters, meanwhile, manifest difficulties in interaction with young males, presumably because they do not experience complementary role shaping by their fathers, and because they have few opportunities to witness smooth heterosexual interaction between their mothers and fathers (Hetherington, 1972). Research on father absence indicates, as one might expect, that the effects of father absence can be ameliorated or accentuated depending on both the mother's ability to cope with the new demands upon her, and the attitudes she expresses regarding male and female roles in general, and concerning her ex-husband in particular. Analogous processes and effects are likely to be operative in the families of single fathers.

Father absence is presumed to affect boys more consistently than girls since

it is a male model which is lacking. Following this logic, it is the daughters of single fathers who are most at risk. Even when gender identity -- which is established early in the preschool years (Money & Ehrhardt, 1972) -- is established prior to the mother's departure, the child still lacks a salient and accessible female model with whom to identify, although extrafamilial models and/or an older sister can sometimes substitute. Both boys and girls suffer as a result of infrequent opportunities to observe successful heterosexual interaction; a special problem is involved when the mother's departure terminated a period of overt marital hostility. This deficiency is not readily ameliorated, since children are likely to resent the threats of intrusion by the father's female friends.

On the other hand, reciprocal role learning may still occur in single parent families. In fact, a daughter may be called upon to assume a feminine role within the family more frequently and earlier than she would have been had her mother been present. As she gets older, in addition, the girl may be expected to assume neoparental responsibilities within the family; one hopes that she will not be exploited. When the father actively sought custody, finally, we must presume that he is committed to being more involved in child care than is traditionally the case, and that he actively seeks to establish warm, close, and respectful relationships with both sons and daughters.

Typically, the single father both exemplifies and approves of nontraditional gender roles. There is extensive evidence, for example, that close father-daughter relationships are the single most important determinants of career success and competence in girls (Barnett & Baruch, 1978; Lamb, et al., 1979a). For boys, meanwhile, role coherence and secure gender identity are facilitated by the father's nurturance and his necessarily high involvement in interaction with the children: these factors are known to increase the salience of a model (Biller, 1974; Mussen, 1967). Both sons and daughters, as a result, will develop more adaptive and flexible views of masculinity and femininity than are typical.

Puberty is likely to pose a crisis for the single father raising a daughter. Fox (1978) has shown that fathers are extremely reluctant to discuss menstruation and sexuality with their daughters. They expect their wives to assume total responsibility here. Even though the peer group is the primary source of information in these areas anyway, the girl raised by a single father is likely to suffer from the unavailability of an adult figure able and willing to discuss these issues. Fox's evidence implied that illegitimate pregnancy will be more common among these girls due to failure to employ adequate contraceptive precautions.

We believe that the potential for deviant outcomes among the children of single parent families is considerably greater than with any of the other family styles we have discussed. Both a major role model and a major socializing agent and co-parent are missing. As Eleanor Maccoby said recently: "Childrearing is something that many people cannot do adequately as single adults functioning in isolation. Single parents need time off from parenting, they need the company of other adults, they need to have other voices joined with theirs in transmitting values and maturity demands to their children" (Maccoby, 1977, p. 17).

The socialization process need not fail of course. Its success depends on the availability of community supports -- both emotional encouragement and facilities such as substitute child care and house-keeping services.

Most social scientists seem to consider single fathers to be in an especially invidious position because they typically have to assume primary parental responsibility without adequate warning or preparation. Actually, we believe that on average today's single fathers are probably more likely than single mothers to succeed in meeting the extensive demands placed on them. They comprise a highly selected and self-motivated group, simply because popular and judicial skepticism regarding their motivation and ability ensures that they have to fight to attain custody whereas mothers often gain custody by default. In addition, society either tolerates

or expects a single father to work full-time and to employ either a housekeeper or a caretaker whereas all of these would be viewed as indices of incapacity or negligence on the part of single mothers. Furthermore, discrimination in the work place ensures that single fathers are far better off economically than single mothers are.

CONCLUSION

Our review of the literature indicates that fathers, like mothers, play salient roles in the socialization of their children, although their respective contributions may differ in nature. Since most of the relevant studies have involved traditional families, it is crucial to ask whether the patterns of parental -- and more specifically paternal -- influences upon children's development will differ in families which have adopted nontraditional roles. If so, we must also ask: In what ways and by what processes will these differential effects be mediated? To answer these questions, we discussed the probable effects of four nontraditional family styles (dual career/dual worker, role sharing, role reversing, and single parent families) in the light of the various processes of socialization. With one possible exception, these styles represent increases (to varying degrees) in paternal involvement, and (perhaps more significantly) changes in the fathers' perception of their familial roles. Involved fathers perceive themselves as partners in both childrearing and domestic responsibilities, rather than occasional playmates and disciplinarians. Such increased paternal involvement should presage warmer father-child interaction and thereby enhance boys' tendencies to identify with their fathers. The enhancement of these fathers' salience as models, along with the fact that they portray androgynous masculinity, make it likely that their sons develop nontraditional but secure gender identities. Nontraditional fathers are also likely to encourage their daughters to be nontraditional in their activities and orientations. They convey this encouragement both directly, through reciprocal role learning, and indirectly, by supporting their wives' nontraditional aspirations.

In the past, theorists defined such nontraditionality as pathogenic in parents and as a social handicap in children. This assessment would indeed be valid if traditional role divisions were as functional universally as they once were. I believe, however, that they are not, and thus my evaluation of unconventional lifestyles is much more optimistic. In fact, I see them as potentially adaptive: If these lifestyles are adaptive responses to the demands of certain social niches, then the socialization of nontraditional role conceptions is desirable to the extent that the children concerned grow up to inhabit social environments similar to those of their parents.

I want to record one final observation concerning the likely effects of nontraditional parental roles. Marital cooperation and mutual support seem to be crucial regardless of a family's structure. Support is missing in the two family types for which we predicted the greatest possibility of problematic development -- dual-career/dual-worker families in which the father has a traditional orientation, and single parent families. In the former, the father's reluctance to relieve his employed wife of domestic and parental responsibilities may cause the demands of her roles to exceed her capacity to fulfill them, and thereby engender the frustration and resentment which are inimical to healthy relationships. In single parent families, the practical and emotional support of a spouse are lacking and this greatly increases the potential for role-overload. Extrafamilial support thus becomes crucial.

It is important to emphasize in closing that I am not attempting to define a new "ideal" family structure. Our society is highly complex and each niche therein imposes different constraints and makes different demands of families. It would be simplistic to portray any one family style as an ideal; rather, we should advocate a greater tolerance for the diversity of family styles made necessary by the complexity of contemporary society. This tolerance must accompany increasing acceptance of nontraditional family lifestyles and an elimination of the legal, economic, attitudinal, and structural discrimination that currently exists.

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